

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Consumer Protection and Safety Division  
Rail Transit and Crossings Branch  
Rail Transit Safety Section

Resolution ST-78  
June 30, 2005

**RESOLUTION**

RESOLUTION ST-78 GRANTING THE SAN DIEGO METROPOLITAN TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT BOARD A DEVIATION FROM GENERAL ORDER 143-B, SECTION 9.05, EMERGENCY WALKWAYS

**Summary**

This Resolution grants the San Diego Metropolitan Transit Development Board's (MTDB) request to deviate from the provisions of General Order 143-B, Section 9.05, Emergency Walkways requirement.

**Project Description**

MTDB<sup>1</sup> has constructed 5.8 miles of passenger service rail line between Mission Valley and La Mesa scheduled for project completion and revenue service on July 9, 2005. This extension known as the Mission Valley East (MVE), starts at the Mission San Diego Station on the current Mission Valley West line and connects at the Baltimore Junction on the existing Orange Line. The MVE line will add four light rail stations: Grantville; San Diego State University Transit Center; Alvarado Medical Center; and 70<sup>th</sup> Street.

The MVE right-of-way is constructed on an elevated structure, has fencing to prevent trespassing, and has only one at-grade crossing at 70th Street. The elevated portion is 1.98 miles, tunnel section portion is 0.67 miles, and at-grade/cut & fill portion is 3.16 miles.

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1. The Metropolitan Transit Development Board (MTDB), created by State Law (Mills, SB 101) in 1975, was empowered to design, engineer, and build fixed guideway facilities within San Diego County.

**Background**

On December 15, 2004, MTDB requested Commission authority to deviate from GO143-B, Section 9.05, Emergency Walkways to permit encroachment of fixed structures less than two feet in length (e.g. catenary and signal poles) into the emergency walkway, provided that measures are taken to give warning of restricted clearances and at least a 24-inch walkway is accessible.

MTDB's proposed safety mitigation measures are: reducing the number of encroachment locations to eleven; painting the eleven base plate locations yellow for identification; obtaining concurrence letters from the state and local fire jurisdictions to deviate from the California Building Code; and ensuring San Diego Trolley, Inc.'s (SDTI<sup>2</sup>) Standard Operating Procedures are adequate to address the safety hazard created by the narrowing of the emergency walkway.

GO 143-B, Section 9.05, Emergency Walkways requires:

An unobstructed emergency walkway at least thirty (30) inches wide and accessible to persons getting off disabled train shall be provided along all trackage in subways, tunnels, on bridges, and on alignment Classifications 9.04 a, 9.04b(1), and 9.04b(2). Walkways shall have a reasonably regular surface and shall not have a slope exceeding one (1) to six (6) feet horizontal. A single walkway may serve more than one track.

MTDB has constructed tracks spaced 14.5 feet apart with catenary poles and the emergency walkway located between the tracks. The narrowness of the right-of-way precluded MTDB from relocating fixed structures less than two feet in length (e.g. catenary and signal poles) out of the emergency walkway. MTDB states a deviation enabling base plates to encroach into the walkway would not impact the safe egress of passengers out of the rail corridor.

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2. San Diego Trolley, Inc. was created by MTDB in August 1980, as wholly-owned subsidiary responsible for the operation and maintenance of the light rail transit system.

On September 15, 1994, the Commission issued Resolution ST-14 authorizing MTDB, to deviate from the 30-inch walkway requirement at the catenary pole and signal pole locations for the Old Town and Mission Valley West projects. There have been no reported incidents related to encroachment of the emergency walkways. MTDB seeks a similar deviation for the MVE extension.

MTDB believes granting an exemption would allow walkways at pole locations that have minor intrusions into the walkway, without adding ramps to cover the anchor bolts and base plates. This exemption would allow a consistent, clear and safe path of egress along the trackway as required by GO 143-B.

Rail Transit and Crossings Branch (Staff) and MTDB staff performed an on-site right-of-way inspection on February 24, 2005 to determine locations where exemptions were necessary. MTDB staff provided a drawing and identified eleven locations where the exemption is required:

1. Station 0+067: Pole base plate and junction box 2" into walkway
2. Station 0+836: Pole base plate 1" into walkway
3. Station 2+031: Signal Foundation 1.5" into walkway
4. Station 2+044: Down Guy 4" into walkway
5. Station 2+050: Pole base plate 1" into walkway
6. Station 4+197: Fire Indicator Luminare 5" into walkway
7. Station 6+197: Pole base plate 1" into walkway
8. Station 6+712: Pole base plate 2 " into walkway
9. Station 6+760: Pole base plate 1" into walkway
10. Station 8+972: Pole base plate 2.5" into walkway
11. Station 9+496: Pole base plate 2" into walkway

The State Fire Marshal letter dated March 14, 2005, granted MTDB an exemption from parts of the California Building Code, Chapter 10, in the areas where the hazard indicator lights encroach into the emergency walkway. This encroachment occurs at the portals adjacent to the San Diego State University station platforms.

MTDB provided additional letters from the local fire departments with emergency response jurisdictions to the MVE right-of-way. The City of

San Diego Fire Marshal letter dated April 22, 2005 concurred that this minor encroachment does not adversely affect emergency access, and therefore approved MTDB's request to deviate from parts of the California Building Code, Chapter 10. City of La Mesa Fire Department Fire Marshal letter dated April 27, 2005 also approved MTDB's request to deviate from the California Building Code, Chapter 10 for the La Mesa portion of the project.

SDTI's Standard Operating Procedure No. 106.09, dated March 4, 2005, established rules for train operators when persons (authorized or unauthorized) are reported in areas where right-of-way clearance and walkways are limited due to grade separated bridge structures, open-cut subgrade, underground tunnel, or other design conditions.

SDTI's Standard Operating Procedure No. 107.03 dated March 4, 2005, established rules for train operators to follow during evacuations in a controlled or uncontrolled situation at any regular station, between stations in surface street area, on open ballasted track or on elevated guideway structures.

### **Notice**

Notice of MTDB's request was published in the Commission's daily calendar on December 29, 2004.

### **Protests**

The Commission did not receive any protests to MTDB's request for a deviation.

### **Discussion**

Staff reviewed the deviation request and MTDB's proposed safety mitigation measures. Staff believes that MTDB's adopted design and operating procedures are adequate and the deviation should be granted.

### **Findings**

1. On December 15, 2004, MTDB requested Commission authority to deviate from GO143-B, Section 9.05, Emergency Walkways requirement to permit encroachment of fixed structures less than two feet in length (e.g. catenary and signal poles) into the emergency walkway, provided that measures are taken to give warning of restricted clearances and at least a 24-inch walkway is accessible.
2. The State Fire Marshal, City of San Diego Fire Marshal, and La Mesa Fire Marshal provided letters of concurrence for MTDB to deviate from the emergency walkway encroachment.
3. SDTI's Standard Operating Procedures are adequate to address the safety hazard created by the proposed narrowing of the emergency walkway.
4. Staff recommends approval of MTDB's deviation request from GO143-B, Section 9.05, Emergency Walkways requirement.

### **Comments**

This is an uncontested matter in which the decision grants the requested relief. Therefore, pursuant to Public Utilities Code § 311(g)(2), the otherwise applicable 30-day period for public review and comment is being waived.

### **Therefore, IT IS ORDERED that:**

1. The San Diego Metropolitan Transit Development Board's request to deviate from GO 143-B, Section 9.05, Emergency Walkways is granted to permit encroachment of fixed structures less than two feet in length (e.g. catenary and signal poles) into the emergency walkway, provided that measures are taken to give warning of restricted clearances and at least a 24-inch walkway is accessible, at the following eleven right-of-way locations only:
  - 1) Station 0+067: Pole base plate and junction box 2" into walkway
  - 2) Station 0+836: Pole base plate 1" into walkway
  - 3) Station 2+031: Signal Foundation 1.5" into walkway
  - 4) Station 2+044: Down Guy 4" into walkway
  - 5) Station 2+050: Pole base plate 1" into walkway

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- 6) Station 4+197: Fire Indicator Luminaire 5" into walkway
- 7) Station 6+197: Pole base plate 1" into walkway
- 8) Station 6+712: Pole base plate 2 " into walkway
- 9) Station 6+760: Pole base plate 1" into walkway
- 10) Station 8+972: Pole base plate 2.5" into walkway
- 11) Station 9+496: Pole base plate 2" into walkway

2. This resolution is effective today.

I certify that this resolution was adopted by the Public Utilities Commission at its regular meeting held on June 30, 2005. The following Commissioners voting favorably thereon:

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STEVE LARSON  
Executive Director